

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 HA-05 NSCE-00 ICAC-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 JUSE-00 /070 W
-----086060 032325Z /66

O R 032150Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 072
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY QUITO
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTIAGO 5841

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAG: PGOV, SHUM, CI
SUBJECT: LETELIER/MOFFITT CASE: LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS AND
REACTION

REFS: (A) SANTIAGO 5798 AND PREVIOUS (B) SANTIAGO 5827 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE CASE CONTINUES VERY HEAVY
WITH "EL MERCURIO" PRINTING FULL SPANISH TEXT OF THE INDICT-
MENTS. THERE HAVE BEEN NO FURTHER OFFICIAL GOC STATEMENTS
SINCE THOSE OF AUGUST 1 BUT PINOCHET ANSWERED NEWSMEN'S QUES-
TIONS AUGUST 2. REPORTEDLY THE GOVERNMENT HAS BROUGHT
PEDRO ESPINOZA FROM PUNTA ARENAS TO SANTIAGO. WE HAVE GOTTEN
SOME INDICATION THAT THE DECISION TO MOVE QUICKLY ON PRO-
VISIONAL DETENTION WAS AN ISSUE AT THE TOP LEVEL OF THE GOC.

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END SUMMARY.

2. MEDIA COVERAGE. ATTENTION IS STILL WAXING. EVEN
GOC-OWNED "EL CRONISTA" PUT THE TOPIC ON THE FRONT PAGE
AUGUST 3, ALBEIT WITH BIASED AND INACCURATE SLANTS.
PICKING -UP AN IDEA HINTED BY PINOCHET IN HIS BREAKFAST
WITH NEWSMEN AUGUST 2, "EL CRONISTA" SAYS THAT THE DEPART-

MENT OF STATE IS NOT INTERESTED IN CLEARING UP THE LETELIER ASSASSINATION (I.E. IT HAS POLITICAL OBJECTIVES) AND ADDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT "TODAY ADMITTED IT IS INFILTRATED BY MARXISTS." ON AN INSIDE PAGE IT TURNS OUT THAT WHAT HODDING CARTER IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT HALF OF THE PERSONS OF THE DEPARTMENT AND THE WHITE HOUSE DIVULGE SECRET INFORMATION.

3. "EL MERCURIO" PRINTS A FULL SPANISH TEXT OF THE GRAND JURY INDICTMENTS AND HAS EXTENSIVE COVERAGE ON THE VARIOUS EFFORTS AUGUST 2 IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO SUSPEND ARMS SHIPMENTS TO CHILE. "LA TERCERA" HEADLINES A PINOCHET QUOTE THAT "THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT FALL ON ACCOUNT OF THE LETELIER CASE" AND, AS ITS MORE MODEST DOCUMENTARY EFFORT, PROVIDES THE SPANISH TEXT OF THE US/CHILEAN EXTRADITION TREATY. ALL THREE OF THE PRINCIPAL MORNING PAPERS HAVE EDITORIALS ON THE CASE. "EL MERCURIO'S" EFFORT IS BLAND, POINTING OUT THAT THE INDICTMENT DOES NOY YET CONSTITUTE PROOF OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE THREE CHILEANS, BUT CONCLUDING WITH A SEMI-PRESCRIPTION ON HOW TO PROCEED: "THE IRRATIONAL SITUATION ARRIVED AS A RESULT OF THE ASSASSINATION OF ORLANDO LETELIER MUST HAVE A RATIONAL AND JUST SOLUTION, COMPATIBLE WITH NATIONAL DIGNITY AND WITH THE HONOR OF THE ARMED FORCES." "LA TERCERA" EMPHASIZES THE LEGAL NATURE OF THE PROBLEM AND REMINDS ITS READERS THAT THERE ARE THOSE WHO WILL ATTEMPT TO USE THE ISSUE TO OVERLIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THROW THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. "EL CRONISTA" FOCUSES ON THE COOPERATION PROVIDED BY THE GOC IN THE CASE.

4. PINOCHET'S TALK WITH NEWSMEN. THE PRESIDENT SPENT AN HOUR AND A HALF WITH NEWSMEN AUGUST 2 AND MOST OF THE QUESTIONING RELATED TO THE LETELIER/MOFFITT CASE. SEE REFTEL B FOR THE VERBATIM TEXT OF PARTS OF THAT DISCUSSION. IN HIS ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS PINOCHET TRIED TO PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND CONTRERAS AND HE DENIED THAT HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE ARMY COULD BE HURT BY THE PREVENTIVE DETENTION OF THE THREE OFFICIALS OR EVEN THEIR POSSIBLE EXTRADITION; AND, AS HEADLINED BY "LA TERCERA," HE DISCOUNTED THE POSSIBILITY THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WILL FALL BECAUSE OF THE CASE. ASKED WHETHER THE GOC IS PREPARED TO GO TO THE ULTIMATE CONSEQUENCES (THE QUESTIONER PRESUMABLY MEANT TO INCLUDE EXTRADITION OR LOCAL TRIAL) IN THE CASE PINOCHET SAID "WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN PREPARED TO DO SO." ON A SEPARATE BUT NOT UNRELATED MATTER, PINOCHET SEEMED TO TELL THE NEWSMEN THAT HE DOES NOT FAVOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A "PINOCHETISTA" MOVEMENT.

5. THE THREE DETAINEES. THE MEDIA REPORTS THAT COLONEL

EXPINOZA HAS BEEN MOVED FROM PUNTA RENAS TO

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SANTIAGO, BUT DOES NOT SAY WHERE HE IS BEING HELD. ACCOUNTS
DIFFER AS TO WHETHER ARMANDO FERNANDEZ IS IN THE MILITARY
HOSPITAL BECAUSE HE IS ILL (ONE REPORT SAYS ULCERS) OR
SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS MORE CONVENIENT TO HAVE HIM UNDER
HOUSE ARREST THERE THAN AT A MILITARY BASE. SO FAR AS WE
HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DETERMINE, CONTRERAS HAS REMAINED IN HIS
PERSONAL RESIDENCE SINCE THE DETENTION ORDER.

6. CUBILLOS CALLS ON BORQUEZ. FOREIGN MINISTER CUBILLOS
VISITED SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT ISRAEL BORQUEZ YESTERDAY,
FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE-HALF HOUR. HE TOLD THE PRESS HAT
IT WAS A COURTESY VISIT RELATED TO THE DEATH OF A NEAR RELA-
TIVE*

7. MISCELLANEOUS. THE MEDIA HAVE REPORTED EXTENSIVELY
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AMBASSADOR LANDAU'S STATEMENT OF AUGUST 2 (IN ARAICA) THAT THE SOLUTION TO THE LETELIER/MOFFIT CASE LIES IN JUDICIAL PROCESSES. "EL MERCURIO" CONTINUES THE DISCUSSION OF WHETHER CONTRERAS, ESPONIZA, AND, FERNANDEZ MIGHT BE COVERED BY THE APRIL 18 AMNESTY, REFERRING TO ARTICLE 36 OF THE "CODE OF INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE LAW," WHICH SAYS, ACCORDING TO THE NEWSPAPER, THAT LEGISLATION OF THE STATE FROM WHICH EXTRADITION IS REQUESTED, PASSED SUBSEQUENT TO THE COMMISSION OF THE CRIME, CAN NOT BE A BAR TO EXTRADITION.

8. COMMENT: THE GOC HAS GAINED CREDIT INTERNALLY FOR ITS SWIFT ACTION IN RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST FOR PREVENTIVE DETENTION. PINOCHET FOUND THIS A USEFUL POINT IN HIS DISCUSSION WITH NEWSMEN. WE HAVE GOTTEN SOME INDICATION FROM AN OFFICIAL CLOSE TO CUBILLOS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT THIS WAS A HARD FOUGHT DECISION AMONG PINOCHET'S ADVISOR. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, CUBILLOS LED THE FIGHT FOR QUICK AND STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH THE EXTRADITION TREATY.

LANDAU

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